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HEALTH

**DON'T DRIVE
STUPID**

ZERO Fatalities A Goal We Can All Live With™

News Release

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'You Don't Get to Say Goodbye...'

Families of Teen Crash Victims Share Their Loss

(Woods Cross, UT) In 2009, 35 families were devastated to learn that their teenager had been killed in a motor vehicle crash. Today, these families shared their stories to encourage other drivers to use caution on the road.

Jeremy Allan's 16-year-old daughter Porscha, a student at Woods Cross High School, was killed on September 11, 2009. Porscha was with her boyfriend and two other friends in Bountiful Canyon when her boyfriend lost control of the vehicle. The passenger side where Porscha was sitting was crushed.

"In just a few seconds she was gone," said Allan. "Porscha's boyfriend made several mistakes that night. He made the choice to drive fast and recklessly and endanger not only Porscha, but her two best friends as well," said Allan. "But the biggest mistake was that no one was wearing a seat belt. The wreck, and Porscha's death, could have been prevented."

This is the third year the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) has collected stories of teenagers killed in motor vehicle crashes. The book will be used by the UDOH and other state and local agencies as a prevention tool to help young drivers realize the impact their driving decisions have on others. For the past two years, similar books have been distributed to all high school driver education classes in the state.

"Safe driving doesn't just start and end with driver education," said Chad Lythgoe, Driver Education Instructor at Woods Cross High School. "All drivers need to be

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reminded to wear their seat belts, follow traffic laws, and use good judgment when they drive or ride in a car. And adults need to set a good example for teens to help them understand that their driving choices can have serious consequences.”

Sixty-six percent of the teens killed in 2009 were passengers in a car. Thirty-one percent were drivers and three percent of the deaths were motorcycle-related. Half of the crashes (51%) occurred on a weekend. Surprisingly, it wasn’t just the younger, less experienced drivers who were killed as one might typically expect. In fact, teenage drivers ages 18-19 were involved in the vast majority of fatal crashes (74%) when compared to younger teens.

Teen drivers were 2.5 times more likely to have a contributing factor, such as speeding, in a fatal crash than drivers of other ages. In addition to speeding, the most common contributing factors in fatal crashes were failing to stay in the proper lane, running off the road, failing to yield right of way, and overcorrecting. Only 41 percent of the teens killed in 2009 were wearing a seat belt.

“Please learn from these stories,” said Jenny Johnson, UDOH Violence and Injury Prevention Program. “Talk with your loved ones, friends, and classmates about these how these tragedies might have been prevented and set rules for your car and whenever you ride in a car.”

To download a copy of the ‘You Don’t Get to Say Goodbye’ booklet in English or Spanish, visit www.health.utah.gov/vipp or www.dontdrivestupid.com.

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